

## **Police, Schools Agree to Agree**

By KEITH L. MARTIN

The Duxbury Police Department and School Committee now have a formal agreement to work together to ensure security at town schools.

At Wednesday's school committee meeting, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to join resources and materials to provide a safe place for students to learn.

"An MOU...is not policy per say, but rather an understanding between the parties," said school committee member Paul Desmond.

The memorandum was the result of several meetings this summer between the superintendent, school principals, school committee members and police representatives and a by-product of the Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, said Desmond.

Desmond defined the scope of the agreement as "the sharing of information and resources concerning incidents of threats, violence or any other behavior or incidents that pose a threat to the safety and well being of stu-

dents and employees of the schools."

The agreement further establishes the position of a Student Resource Officer (SRO) to help both parties in reducing and preventing school-based violence and criminal activity.

Confirming with Police Chief Mark DeLuca, who was present at the meeting, Desmond announced that Friend Weiler, currently D.A.R.E. officer for the schools, would be the first choice for the position.

In an interview on Monday, September 15, Superintendent of Schools Eileen Williams said Weiler has been DARE officer and liaison to the school department for a number of years. While this work is not new under the agreement, it merely formalizes the SRO position, she said.

She added that the school department is looking into modifications of the DARE program, but that Weiler will remain affiliated with that program as well as performing his duties as SRO.

"It was important to both the schools and the police that

there be some consistency in working with students," said Williams. "If [Weiler] is working with younger students in DARE or another safety program, they'll continue to work with him into their high school career. That consistency is important."

Williams also indicated that the SRO will not be in schools full-time and that while payment for the officer will come from the police department, the school department has used some grant funding to establish the position.

According to the agreement, the officer in that role shall establish an office in the schools as well as create and maintain records to help in his duties. Those records may be based on information obtained by the police, the SRO's own observations and/or investigations, as well as the observations or personal knowledge of teachers, administrators or students.

The committee unanimously approved the memorandum of understanding as written and DeLuca and Chairwoman Carol Love signed the document, putting it directly into effect.

Parent Alison Rich asked the committee how it planned to communicate the agreement to parents to which Williams replied she would work with DHS principal John McCarthy on details.

"It will go out to all schools, but the most important are the high school and middle school," she said.